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Congress of the United States

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INDEPENDENT

September 12, 2002

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud
First Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of National Guard
Royal Court
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Dear Crown Prince Abdullah:

I write to continue the dialogue that my Congressional delegation began with Prince Saud during our recent visit to Saudi Arabia. It is my sincere hope that the Saudi government will work to respond to the concerns raised by me and my colleagues, especially those regarding the kidnapping and retention of American citizens. However, based on the actions of the Saudi government during my trip, and the recent letter from Prince Bandar, I have grave doubts as to whether the Saudi government has any intent to resolve this serious problem.

As you are aware, prior to my departure for Saudi Arabia, I requested meetings with you, Prince Saud, and a number of other senior Saudi officials. Your representatives indicated that they would work to arrange these meetings. Despite the representations made by your lobbyists, Prince Saud was the only Saudi government official who would meet with the delegation in Saudi Arabia. I found your refusal to meet with the delegation disappointing.

Prior to the delegation's departure, my staff explained to your representatives what I would be asking for when I met with either you or Prince Saud. I did this because I had been assured that the Saudi government was interested in resolving the numerous cases in which Americans had been kidnapped and held in Saudi Arabia, some of which were over 15 years old. From my perspective, I thought it would be best to explain my request in advance so as to allow the Saudi government to form a thoughtful and informed response.

To recapitulate, your representatives were informed prior to my departure that I would request that the Saudi government make kidnapped or retained children available for a meeting with their parent in the United States. This would provide the kidnapped child -- or in some cases the adult -- an opportunity to meet with a parent that they might not have seen for many years. It would also allow the child an opportunity to make a fair judgment about a parent who may have been depicted in an unfavorable light by the kidnapping parent over many years. Your

representatives were further told that I did not believe that other types of meetings, such as meetings in Saudi Arabia, or meetings with third parties, were appropriate.

The Roush Case

Given the fact that I made the terms of my request very clear before the Congressional delegation left the United States, I was dismayed to learn that the Roush sisters, Alia and Aisha, had been taken to London before I could even present my request to you or Prince Saud. Your government arranged for the Roush sisters to fly to London, meet with a State Department official and a television producer, and deliver a statement regarding their purported desire to remain in Saudi Arabia, all without any advance notice to the delegation. If any of your representatives had checked with me, you would have learned that we found the circumstances of the London meeting to be completely unacceptable. First, Mrs. Roush was not allowed to meet with her daughters. Second, the Roush sisters' husbands, along with a retinue of other Saudi men, were present outside the meeting, creating a possible atmosphere of intimidation. Third, it is my understanding that a public relations advisor was present with the sisters during their statement. It is unknown who this individual was, or who she works for, creating further concerns about possible intimidation faced by the Roush sisters. At a minimum, her presence precluded any candid communications by the sisters.

The fact that your government arranged the London meeting in secret, without consulting with the delegation or Mrs. Roush, shows that your government was more interested in obtaining a statement from the sisters which could be used for public relations than in a good faith resolution of the case. Given these facts, I am surprised that Prince Bandar claims that the Saudi government "delivered precisely" what I requested. To be blunt, what your government did was the opposite of what we had requested of your representatives, and I have no doubt that the purpose of the London meeting was to undermine the delegation's work. Furthermore, it is certain to have a chilling effect on other young American citizens currently in situations similar to that of the Roush sisters.

Prince Saud and Prince Bandar have claimed that the Roush sisters did not want to travel to America or meet with their mother. Given years of misinformation and derogatory depictions in this case, it is difficult to know if that is indeed true. Regardless, the Saudi government has the power and authority to make this simple request a reality. It is telling that the Saudi government, which refuses to respect the wishes of women when it comes to travel, appearing in court, dress, or even driving a car, respects the purported wishes of the Roush sisters to refuse to travel to the United States or meet with their mother.

Given the fact that the London meeting took place under conditions which were not clearly free of duress or intimidation, I reiterate my earlier request, which is that the Roush sisters, and any children they might have, and all other U.S. citizen victims of Saudi kidnapping be permitted to travel to the United States to meet with their American parent. While I have no way of confirming at this time whether Alia and Aisha Gheshayan have been subjected to abuse or intimidation, there is a clear record of such abuse taking place when Americans are taken to Saudi Arabia, as indicated by the testimony of Dria Davis at the Committee's June 12, 2002,

hearing, and as also indicated by women who met with the delegation in Saudi Arabia who are, to say the least, terrified.

The Stowers Case

I am also very concerned about what has happened in the case of Amjad Radwan. As you are aware, her case is one of significant public interest in the United States. Amjad Radwan has been held in Saudi Arabia against her will for many years. She has been attempting to leave the Kingdom for most of her life. Yet, despite the fact that she was an adult American citizen who wanted to leave the Kingdom, she was not allowed to do so. Yet, at the very time the Congressional delegation was preparing to visit Saudi Arabia to request her release, a number of unusual things happened to Amjad. First, Amjad's father put her in a hospital for a painful medical procedure. Then he married her to a 42-year old Saudi Air Force officer who already has a wife and five children. Finally, the day of the delegation's departure from the United States, Amjad disappeared from the house where she lived with her mother and brother, ending up in the custody of her new husband.

It does not seem possible that Ms. Radwan's operation, marriage, and disappearance were mere coincidences. It appears that they were calculated preemptive actions taken in preparation for the Congressional delegation's visit to the Kingdom. Given the fact that Ms. Radwan was married to a Saudi Air Force pilot, and given the extraordinary amount of attention paid to this case, it is difficult to believe that at least some members of the Saudi government were not aware that she was to be married. In any event, I am extremely concerned that the flurry of events involving Ms. Radwan were calculated to put pressure on her to remain in Saudi Arabia.

However, these actions were just the beginning of the attempts to pressure and discredit Ms. Radwan. I met with Ms. Radwan on August 30, 2002, to discuss whether she wanted to leave Saudi Arabia. During this meeting, it became clear to me that Ms. Radwan wanted to leave Saudi Arabia, but that she could not because of the enormous pressure being placed upon her. Indeed, during the meeting, religious police tried to intimidate me and Amjad and end our meeting. Shortly after the meeting, I learned that Prince Saud had called Ambassador Jordan to tell him that Amjad Radwan and her husband, Mohammed Al-Ammri, had come to Prince Saud claiming that I had offered them \$1 million if they would come to the United States. According to Ambassador Jordan, Prince Saud stated that Amjad and Al-Ammri offered to stay in Saudi Arabia if the Saudi government would pay them more.

Of course, I never offered Amjad or her husband any money to come to the United States. Therefore, this entire story was fabricated. I find it inconceivable that a 19-year old woman would attempt to extort Prince Saud and the Saudi royal family. Nevertheless, according to Ambassador Jordan, this was the story advanced by Prince Saud. In hindsight, it appears that the story was created by Amjad's husband or the Saudi government, and that it was then used by the Saudi government to discredit Amjad or me. Indeed, during my meeting with him on September 1, Prince Saud raised this story three times, each time to discredit Amjad's statements that she wanted to leave Saudi Arabia. Therefore, while the Saudi government did make forward progress by granting Amjad Radwan legal permission to leave the country, such progress must be viewed in its proper context. First, this action was taken by the Saudi government only after a

lengthy delay, and only after six U.S. Congressmen took the extraordinary step of flying to Saudi Arabia. Second, while Ms. Radwan was given legal permission to leave, she was also subjected to pressure to stay in the country. Third, Ms. Radwan's credibility, and my own credibility, was attacked by the Saudi government. If the Saudi government was truly committed to resolving these cases and allowing U.S. citizens the right to leave Saudi Arabia, I believe that it could have allowed Ms. Radwan the right to leave the country without all of the accompanying pressure and attacks. Furthermore, the day the delegation departed Saudi Arabia, an extremely misleading newspaper article about Amjad appeared in a Saudi newspaper. Again, this can hardly be deemed coincidental.

Given the way the Saudi government conducted itself during the delegation's trip to Saudi Arabia, it is no wonder that you decided to deny visas to the press representatives I invited to accompany the delegation. I was surprised that your government denied these visas, considering that your representatives had not indicated that there was any problem until just days before the delegation's trip. In fact, one of your lobbyists told one of the media representatives that he would be granted a visa to accompany the delegation, only to reverse course a week later. However, now I understand that your government likely would have been less comfortable engaging in the tactics it did in the Roush and Stowers cases if journalists had accompanied the delegation. Further supporting my conclusion is the fact that the Saudi government did grant visas to other journalists to come to Saudi Arabia at the same time the delegation was there. However, those journalists were in Saudi Arabia to cover stories much more favorable to the Saudi government than the abduction story.

It is my sincere hope that the Saudi government will take immediate actions that are constructive and positive. I have heard repeatedly from your representatives, as well as from Prince Saud and Prince Bandar, that it is unfair to focus on Saudi kidnappings and that Saudi kidnappings account for only a small percentage of those worldwide. Such arguments ignore three critical facts. First, Saudi Arabia is the only country I know of in which innocent adult U.S. citizen women can be held in the country against their will by the government. Therefore, unlike cases in Germany, Austria, or any other country, kidnapped American girls in Saudi Arabia will never be able to leave, even after they grow up, unless they have the permission of a male guardian. Second, Saudi Arabia's human rights conditions mean that Americans kidnapped to Saudi Arabia have little chance of normal life. For example, American girls in Saudi Arabia will have none of the rights that they would have at home. Moreover, the complete lack of religious freedom in Saudi Arabia means that non-Muslim American children are often forcibly converted to Islam after they are taken to Saudi Arabia. Indeed, the State Department has found that the Roush sisters were the victims of forcible conversion to Islam. Finally, there is no legal framework in place between the United States and Saudi Arabia to govern the return of kidnapped children, or visitation between estranged parents. Hopefully such a framework can be established in the near future. In the absence of such a framework, our governments will have to continue working hard to resolve these individual cases.

In addition, while your government's assurances to work with us are welcome, it should be noted that there is a long history of the Saudi government not working with the U.S. government on these matters. Indeed, the Saudi government does not recognize U.S. law. In fact, in the case of Joanna Stephenson, the Saudi Embassy was complicit in a kidnapping of U.S.

September 12, 2002

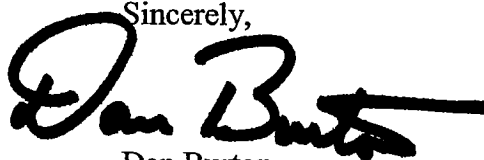
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citizens in violation of U.S. law. In that case, Ms. Stephenson had legal custody of her three children, and her Saudi husband was granted a two-week unsupervised visit with the children, under the condition that he not leave the U.S. In fact, the court sent a letter to the Saudi Embassy informing it that Ms. Stephenson's husband was not allowed to take the children out of the U.S., and requested that the Saudi Embassy not grant the children passports. Despite this warning, it is my understanding that the Saudi Embassy granted passports to the children, allowing them to be kidnapped.

I hope that your government takes this issue seriously. The conduct of your government during the delegation's trip to Saudi Arabia, as well as Prince Bandar's letter of September 9, 2002, suggests otherwise. For example, Prince Bandar claimed that there are only five cases of interest pending between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. As my staff made clear to your representatives before the delegation left for Saudi Arabia, the list of 14 cases we provided to you was not an exhaustive list, and was merely representative of the cases under investigation by the Committee. Indeed, during my visit to Saudi Arabia, it became clear that there are many U.S. citizens in Saudi Arabia who face severe physical abuse, who fear for their lives, and are unable to leave Saudi Arabia due to the policies of the Saudi government. While in Saudi Arabia, I met with several of these individuals, and their stories are extremely distressing. Some of these people have closely watched what has happened to Amjad Radwan and the Roush sisters, and they are terrified. For the Saudi government to claim that there are only five cases requiring resolution ignores the facts, and suggests that the Saudi government is not working in good faith to solve the problem.

In the interest of strengthening the ties between our two nations, I hope that we can work together in a more constructive fashion to resolve these cases and give these U.S. citizens a real opportunity to make decisions about their own futures. Rest assured, however, that until real progress is achieved, I will use all means available to me to assist U.S. citizens who have been either kidnapped or retained against their will in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Burton". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "D" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

Dan Burton
Chairman

cc: President George W. Bush
Secretary of State Colin Powell
Ambassador Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz